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Around Oakland

Brothers want to be together

By DIANA DILLABER MURRAY , Of The Daily Oakland Press

11/16/2003

November 16, 2003

Adoptions for more than 200 children will be finalized Nov. 25, the first Michigan Adoption Day.

The theme for the day is "Giving Thanks for Families."

In Oakland County, Judges Linda Hallmark and Eugene Arthur Moore will be legalizing the bond between the new families.

It will be too soon for brothers Christian, 8, and Jerrimee, 6, but they hope at least by next year's Adoption Day they will be in a permanent home with loving parents.

The two youngsters are among hundreds in southeastern Michigan awaiting adoption after being placed in foster care because of death or illness in the family, abuse or neglect.

The Family Independence Agency and private agencies under contract to the state helped place 2,833 children into adoptive homes in 2002.

"Almost 2,000 of these children were in sibling groups needing adoption," said Nanette Bowler, state FIA director. The FIA and the Michigan Supreme Court are sponsoring Adoption Day.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan said she hopes the event will draw attention not only to the adoption process but also to the number of children available for adoption.

"Our state has thousands of children in foster care as a result of child protective proceedings," Corrigan said.

"Most of them hope to return to a home where abuse or neglect is not present, but many can never return home again. Those are the children for whom adoption is the only answer," she said.

At the end of September, there were 19,490 children in Michigan's foster care program, 4,584 with a goal of adoption, according to the FIA.

Christian and Jerrimee are hoping to grow up together.

"The boys should be adopted together," said Kelly Beard, their adoption

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worker with Orchards Children's Services. "They have a very strong bond with one another and would like to be adopted together."

Christian is in the second grade and needs help to focus on his school work.


Jerrimee is in first grade and no longer needs child development programs because he is fully potty trained and has learned to bathe himself.

The boys are in weekly therapy together and are taking medication.

They enjoy playing video games, playing outside, watching cartoons and playing with Power Rangers, Beard said.

To learn more about adopting the brothers or other children, call Beard at (248) 593-2197. Prospective adoptive parents can also visit www.mare.org and www.michigan.gov/fia and click on adoption.

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